



King's Research Portal

DOI:

[10.1353/hph.2017.0027](https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2017.0027)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Carlisle, C. (2017). Spinoza's Acquiescentia. *JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY*, 55(2), 209-236. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2017.0027>

Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

SPINOZA'S ACQUIESCENTIA

Abstract

This article examines the affect of *acquiescentia* in Spinoza's *Ethics*, presenting an original interpretation of *acquiescentia* which illuminates the account of blessedness developed in Part V of the *Ethics*. It also shows how Spinoza's complex but coherent account of *acquiescentia* has been obscured by inconsistent translations of *acquiescentia*, and forms of the verb *acquiescere*, in the standard English edition of the *Ethics*. Spinoza's discussion of *acquiescentia* both draws on and critiques the equivalent Cartesian passion, *la satisfaction de soi-même*, which is translated as '*acquiescentia in se ipso*' in the Latin edition of the *Passions of the Soul*. For Spinoza, *acquiescentia* is an inherently cognitive affect, since it involves an idea of oneself (as the cause of one's joy). As such, the affect is closely correlated to the three kinds of cognition identified by Spinoza in *Ethics* II. Just as there are three kinds of cognition, so there are three kinds of *acquiescentia* – a point that has hitherto been missed by commentators. Two qualities – stillness and obedience – provide the criteria for distinguishing true or genuine *acquiescentia* from its false, "empty" counterpart, corresponding to *imaginatio*. According to Spinoza, Descartes's conception of *acquiescentia* belongs entirely to this inadequate, confused kind of cognition. The qualities of stillness and obedience also distinguish between two kinds of true *acquiescentia*, corresponding to *ratio* and *scientia intuitiva*.

SPINOZA'S ACQUIESCENTIA

In Part IV of the *Ethics* Spinoza writes that “self-esteem [*acquiescentia in se ipso*] is really the highest thing we can hope for.”¹ He opposes this affect to both humility and repentance, which are integral to Christian virtue; he describes pride – for Augustine, the root of sin – as a kind of *acquiescentia in se ipso*. Of course, Spinoza’s distinctive views about God were enough to draw the charge of atheism from many of his contemporaries. But one of these critics, Pierre Poiret, took the suggestion that we should aspire above all to “self-esteem” as a clear sign that Spinoza’s philosophy was immoral and unchristian. For Poiret, *acquiescentia in se ipso* is “a vice, head and root of all [vices], and true atheism.”² Today the idea that self-esteem is the most we can hope for sounds less shocking – we might come across it in any lifestyle magazine. As Poiret anticipated, it seems to signal the naturalistic outlook of our age: humanist at best, nihilist at worst. But is this really Spinoza’s view? Why would a philosopher who argues that our “blessedness” involves knowledge and love of God, and the eternity of our minds, conclude that “self-esteem is really the highest thing we can hope for”?

This paper shows why we cannot attribute this view to Spinoza. More precisely, the decision to translate *acquiescentia in se ipso* as ‘self-esteem’ in the standard English edition of the *Ethics* both distorts and obscures Spinoza’s account of the human good. Although many commentators acknowledge that this translation is questionable, most nevertheless follow Edwin Curley in adopting it.³ This is not to suggest that *acquiescentia in se ipso* has nothing to do with our modern concept of self-esteem. Nor is it to deny that those scholars who accept Curley’s translation offer sophisticated and illuminating discussions of this affect and its role within Spinoza’s thought.⁴ And Curley himself had good reasons for using different English words for *acquiescentia* over the course of the *Ethics*, for as we shall see the meaning of *acquiescentia* varies according to the epistemic, psychological and ethical

condition of the individual who experiences it. However, several important features of *acquiescentia* have been lost in translation.

First, the standard translation muddles the connections between Spinoza's discussion of *acquiescentia* and the source text for this concept, Descartes's *Passions of the Soul*. Second, this translation obscures continuities between *acquiescentia in se ipso* in Parts III and IV of the *Ethics*, and the "satisfaction of mind" (*acquiescentia animi*) and "true peace of mind" (*vera animi acquiescentia*) attributed to the wise man in *Ethics* V.⁵ Third – and this is connected to the previous point – it obscures the way Spinoza distinguishes between different kinds of *acquiescentia*. As we shall see, *acquiescentia* is an inherently cognitive affect, which can be based on any of the three kinds of cognition that Spinoza identifies in the *Ethics*: imagination, reason, and intuitive knowledge.⁶ Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, translating *acquiescentia in se ipso* as 'self-esteem' fails to capture the meaning that *acquiescentia* has for Spinoza. This meaning is twofold: on the one hand, the Latin root *quies* signifies stillness, quiet, rest; on the other hand, the verb *acquiescere* also carries the sense of acceptance, submission or obedience conveyed by the English 'acquiesce'. The concept of *acquiescentia*, taken in this twofold meaning, indicates the distinctive character of the freedom, virtue and blessedness which Spinoza opposes to an unfree, illusory kind of existence (and particularly to an unfree, illusory kind of religion). More precisely, *acquiescentia* conveys the affective, experiential dimension of this highest human good, what we might call its feeling-quality. In this way, it takes its place among – and contributes something distinctive to – the cluster of concepts that define *beatitudo*: intuitive knowledge, eternity, and the intellectual love of God.

Since the English 'acquiescence' captures the twofold sense of stillness or rest, and acceptance or obedience, 'acquiescence in oneself' may not be a bad translation of *acquiescentia in se ipso*.⁷ However, this leaves out the joy that is integral to Spinoza's

definition of *acquiescentia in se ipso* – whereas ‘self-esteem’ at least conveys the idea of positive feeling. Perhaps ‘self-contentment’ offers the best compromise between ‘acquiescence in oneself’ and ‘self-esteem’, since contentment suggests a peaceful kind of joy. In her 1856 translation of the *Ethics* George Eliot interprets *acquiescentia in se ipso* in this way: her Spinoza claims that “self-contentment is in truth the highest point we can hope to attain”.⁸ Eliot translates Part V’s *acquiescentia animi* as “repose of mind” (VP27) or “peace of mind”, so that like Curley she obfuscates the continuity between the *acquiescentia* of Parts III and IV and that of Part V. Donald Rutherford may be right to suggest that “there is no fully satisfactory translation of the phrase [*acquiescentia in se ipso*] in English.”⁹ In this paper, then, *acquiescentia* will remain untranslated, in order to retain the rich and multiple resonance the term has for Spinoza.

The first section of this paper considers how Spinoza’s concept of *acquiescentia* is formed by, and responsive to, Descartes’s discussion of *la satisfaction de soi-meme*. The second section elucidates Spinoza’s account of *acquiescentia* according to his three kinds of cognition, showing that each kind of cognition has its corresponding affect of *acquiescentia*. The concluding section summarises this Spinozist theory of *acquiescentia*, indicates its place within his philosophical system, and briefly raises the question of how *acquiescentia* might be cultivated in practice.

1. Spinoza’s *acquiescentia in se ipso* and Descartes’s *satisfaction de soi-meme*

For Spinoza, *acquiescentia* was a new term, not known before its use in Descartes’s *Passions of the Soul*. According to Christian Wolff, Descartes “introduced *acquiescentia in seipso* into philosophy.”¹⁰ But of course Wolff is referring to the first Latin translation of *Les passions de*

l'âme, completed by Henri Desmarets in 1650, just a year after the French original.¹¹ So Desmarets, rather than Descartes, should be credited with bringing *acquiescentia* into the philosophical vocabulary.¹² In the second part of *Les passions de l'âme* Descartes defines and discusses a series of particular passions, among them *la satisfaction de soy-mesme*, which he opposes to *le Repentir*. In translating article 63 of *Les passions de l'âme*, Part II, Desmarets chooses '*acquiescentia in se ipso*' for *la Satisfaction de soy-mesme*, and '*dat nobis acquiescentiam interiorem*' for *nous donne une Satisfaction interior*. Article 190, in Part III of Descartes's text, returns to *la Satisfaction de soy-mesme*, and this time Desmarets chooses, twice, *Satisfactio sive Acquiescentia in se ipso*.¹³

Why does Desmarets coin the neologism *acquiescentia* to translate Descartes's *la satisfaction*, instead of using only the more obvious *satisfactio*? *Acquiescentia* conveys stillness or rest, and although this sense may be implicit in *satisfactio*, it is made much more explicit by *acquiescentia*. In article 190 Descartes emphasises that this quality of stillness or rest belongs to *la Satisfaction de soy mesme* of the consistently virtuous person: *la Satisfaction, qu'ont tous-jours ceux qui constamment la vertu, est une habitude en leur âme, qui se nomme tranquillité & repos de conscience*.¹⁴ Desmarets translates the latter part of this sentence as "*Tranquillitas & Quies Conscientiae*", and he amplifies it by identifying the passion of *la satisfaction* as *acquiescentia* as well as *satisfactio*. This decision is not unfaithful to the original text. But while Descartes explicates '*satisfaction*' in terms of '*tranquillité*' and '*repos*', Desmarets makes '*quies*' integral to this passion, and thus inseparable from it.

Spinoza's incorporation of the term *acquiescentia in se ipso* into his own discussion of the affects in *Ethics* III and IV engages closely with Descartes's *Passions of the Soul*.¹⁵ Spinoza is clearly indebted to the Cartesian account of *la satisfaction de soi-même*, and it is equally clear that he engages critically with it. This close critical engagement is partially

obscured when Spinoza's *acquiescentia in se ipso* is translated into English as 'self-esteem', while the corresponding Cartesian passion is translated as 'self-satisfaction'.¹⁶ (And confusion is further encouraged by the fact that Descartes's *la satisfaction de soi-même* is a distinct passion from *l'estime*, which is coupled with and opposed to *le mépris* in article 54.)

Six features of Descartes's discussion of 'self-satisfaction' are echoed in Spinoza's discussion of *acquiescentia in se ipso*:

(1) 'Self-satisfaction' is a joy relating to an action that a person has caused herself: "We may consider the cause of a good or evil, present as well as past. A good done by ourselves gives us an internal satisfaction."¹⁷ This joy, Descartes emphasises, "depends completely on ourselves."¹⁸ Similarly, Spinoza states that "I shall call Joy accompanied by the idea of an internal cause, *Acquiescentia in se ipso*," and that "*Acquiescentia in se ipso* is a Joy born of the fact that a man considers himself and his own power of acting."¹⁹

(2) Self-satisfaction is coupled with, and opposed to, repentance (*le repentir*). Descartes defines repentance as "a kind of sadness" that "results from believing we have done an evil deed."²⁰ Similarly, in *Ethics* III Spinoza identifies "the sadness contrary to *acquiescentia in se ipso* as repentance."²¹ In his "Definitions of the Affects" he qualifies this by distinguishing between two senses of *acquiescentia in se ipso*: one opposed to humility, and the other opposed to repentance. (We will return to this distinction in the second section of the paper.)

(3) Descartes elevates self-satisfaction above the other passions, insofar as he describes it as "the sweetest of all the passions" (while repentance is "the most bitter...because its causes lie in ourselves alone").²² As we have seen, Spinoza suggests that "*Acquiescentia in se ipso* is really the highest thing we can hope for".

(4) Self-satisfaction can be either “a habit of the soul” or “a passion”, depending on whether it accompanies the steadfast pursuit of virtue, or arises as a “fresh satisfaction” following the performance of “an action we think good.”²³ Spinoza echoes this distinction in his account of *acquiescentia*. Like all the affects, *acquiescentia* can be predominantly passive, “a confused idea,” and fleeting, contributing to “vacillations of mind.”²⁴ In contrast with the “ignorant man,” the “wise man” enjoys lasting *acquiescentia*, “always possesses true peace of mind [*vera animi acquiescentia*].”²⁵

(5) Having distinguished between the “habit” and the “passion” of self-satisfaction, Descartes suggests that the latter may be either genuine or “vain”. When the cause of our self-satisfaction “is not just, i.e. when the actions from which we derive great satisfaction are not very important or are even vicious, [then our] satisfaction is absurd and serves only to produce a kind of vanity and impertinent arrogance.”²⁶ In the *Ethics*, Spinoza identifies this deluded form of self-satisfaction as pride (*Superbia*), defined as “thinking more highly of oneself than is just, out of love for oneself.”²⁷ Pride is a species of *acquiescentia in se ipso*: “it can also be defined as love of oneself, or *acquiescentia in se ipso*, insofar as it so affects a man that he thinks more highly of himself than is just.”²⁸ More generally, though, Spinoza suggests that *acquiescentia* itself, not just its prideful form, can be “empty” (*vana*).²⁹

(6) Descartes illustrates his description of vain self-satisfaction by the example of religious bigotry, hypocrisy and violence. Just over half of article 190 is devoted to this example, which is depicted in particularly vivid and forceful terms. The “vanity” and “impertinent arrogance” of deluded self-satisfaction, writes Descartes,

<ext>

is noticeable especially in those who believe themselves devout, but are merely bigoted and superstitious. These are people who – under the pretext of frequently going to church,

reciting many prayers, wearing their hair short, fasting, and giving alms – think that they are absolutely perfect and imagine that they are such close friends of God that they could not do anything to displease him. They suppose that anything their passion dictates is a commendable zeal, even though it sometimes dictates the greatest crimes that men can commit, such as the betrayal of cities, the killing of sovereigns, and the extermination of whole peoples for the sole reason that they do not accept their opinions.³⁰

</ext>

The specificity and detail of this passage suggests that Descartes's observations of errant religiosity provide not simply an example of vain self-satisfaction, but the motivation for his account of this passion. Perhaps these observations constitute the context for his discussion of the entire concept of self-satisfaction – both true and false, virtuous and vicious. The connections between Spinoza's account of *acquiescentia* and superstitious religion will be explicated in some detail in the following section of this paper. Spinoza's critique of superstition provides an important context for the *Ethics*, and in particular for his analysis of the affects and of "human bondage". Spinoza understands superstition in both cognitive and affective terms (indeed, these are not really separable for him): superstition is always based on inadequate cognition, and manifest in the passion of fear, and as such it is opposed to the freedom and blessedness arising from adequate understanding and manifest in the active affect of love.³¹ This contrast between inadequate cognition and fear, on the one hand, and adequate knowledge and love on the other, shows up in Spinoza's distinction between two kinds of *acquiescentia*. He criticises the "empty" *acquiescentia in se ipso* "that is encouraged only by the opinion of the multitude," not only because it is irrational but because it makes people both fearful and violent: "he who exults at being esteemed by the multitude is made anxious daily... this gives rise to a monstrous lust of each to crush the other in any way

possible.”³² However, true *acquiescentia in se ipso* arises from reason: “the greatest *acquiescentia in se ipso* there can be arises from [man’s] reflection [on his] true power of acting, or virtue, [which] is reason itself.”³³ This authentic *acquiescentia in se ipso* involves a just love for oneself, i.e. a joy in one’s own power of acting, accompanied by (indeed, inseparable from) the adequate idea of oneself as the cause of this joy.

There are, then, significant continuities between Descartes’s *satisfaction de soi-meme* and Spinoza’s *acquiescentia in se ipso*. However, Spinoza appropriates these six characteristics of *la satisfaction de soi-même* in a way that critiques and subverts the Cartesian passion. This appropriation targets a central tenet of Cartesian philosophy: the freedom of the human will. For Descartes, virtue consists in the rational exercise of free will – and this is particularly relevant to the twin passions of self-satisfaction and repentance, since we deserve to be praised or blamed only for using our freedom well or badly. These passions accompany deeds “done by ourselves,” that is to say deeds caused by “ourselves alone,” through our own volitions. Self-satisfaction is closely connected to *générosité*, which is for Descartes “the key to all the other virtues and a general remedy for every disorder of the passions.”³⁴ Descartes explains that *générosité* involves both the affirmation of human freedom and the “constant resolution” to use this freedom well.³⁵ “There is only one thing in us which could give us good reason to esteem ourselves, namely, the exercise of our free will and the control we have over our volitions,” writes Descartes.³⁶

We have seen that Descartes distinguishes between true and illusory, vain self-satisfaction, identifying superstitious religion with the latter. For Spinoza, however, the whole Cartesian concept of self-satisfaction – along with its mirror image, repentance – belongs within the category of illusion. We only imagine that our wills are free, and imagination (the “first kind of cognition”) is inadequate.³⁷ A “decision of the mind which is

believed to be free is not distinguished from the imagination itself,” writes Spinoza, concluding that those who “believe that they do anything from a free decision of the mind, dream with open eyes.”³⁸ He argues that the idea of free decision is a “fiction”.³⁹ Throughout the *Ethics* he asserts that belief in free will is a symptom of ignorance: “men think themselves free, because they are conscious of their volitions and their appetite, and do not think...of the causes by which they are disposed to wanting and willing, because they are ignorant of those causes.”⁴⁰ In fact, Spinoza states plainly, “the will cannot be a free cause, but only a necessary one” – and this applies to both God and human beings.⁴¹

When Spinoza defines *acquiescentia in se ipso* together with repentance in his “Definitions of the Affects”, he links both affects to the erroneous belief in free will.⁴² He distinguishes this inadequate form of *acquiescentia in se ipso* from a more neutral form – that opposed to humility – which does not involve the idea of free will:

<ext>

Acquiescentia in se ipso is opposed to Humility, insofar as we understand by it a Joy born of the fact that we consider our power of acting. But insofar as we also understand by it a Joy, accompanied by the idea of some deed which we believe we have done from a free decision of the Mind, it is opposed to Repentance, which we define as follows.⁴³

Repentance is a Sadness accompanied by the idea of some deed we believe ourselves to have done from a free decision of the Mind.⁴⁴

</ext>

In his Explanation to the latter definition, Spinoza refers the reader back to Part II: “On the free decision of the Mind, see IIP35s.” The reference is damning. The scholium to IIP35 elucidates the proposition that “Falsity consists in the privation of knowledge which

inadequate, *or* mutilated and confused, ideas involve” using the example of belief in free will: “men are deceived in thinking themselves free... they say that human actions depend on the will, but these are only words for which they have no idea. For all are ignorant of what the will is.”⁴⁵ Thus Spinoza presents the Cartesian affects of *acquiescentia in se ipso* and repentance as intrinsically inadequate. Indeed, these affects are irredeemably bound up with a proliferation of negative connotations: falsity, privation of knowledge, mutilated and confused ideas, self-deception, ignorance.

In distinguishing between true and vain self-satisfaction, Descartes suggests that the latter can lead to violence and persecution: “it sometimes dictate the greatest crimes that men can commit, such as...the extermination of whole peoples.” But for Spinoza it is the misguided commitment to free will which produces, or at least stimulates, the kind of violence Descartes describes. At EIIIP49 he argues that the fiction of free will exacerbates the affects of both love and hatred: “because men consider themselves to be free, they have a greater love or hate toward one another than toward other things.”⁴⁶ Spinoza returns to this point at EVP5, this time emphasising the link between belief in free will and ignorance: “imagining a thing as free can be nothing but simply imagining it while we are ignorant of the causes by which it has been determined to act.”⁴⁷ In describing the affective consequences of the idea of free will, he refers specifically to *acquiescentia in se ipso* and repentance. Having repeated his definition of these affects as joy or sadness “accompanied by the idea of oneself as cause,” he adds that “Because men believe themselves to be free, these affects are very violent (see P49).”⁴⁸

Alongside this, as other commentators have noted, Spinoza rids *acquiescentia* and repentance of the moral force of their corresponding Cartesian passions.⁴⁹ While Descartes defines self-satisfaction and repentance with reference to “good” or “evil” deeds, Spinoza omits these terms from his definitions. We have seen that he presents a neutral definition of

acquiescentia in se ipso, coupled with the affect of humility (in contrast to the more Cartesian definition of *acquiescentia in se ipso*, coupled with repentance, that involves believe in free will). These neutral definitions characterise both affects in terms of sheer quantity of power: “*Acquiescentia in se ipso* is a Joy born of the fact that a man considers himself and his own power of acting... Humility is a Sadness born of the fact that a man considers his own lack of power, or weakness.”⁵⁰ In the Explanation to his definition of repentance, Spinoza reflects on the moral force of this affect, and of its corresponding *acquiescentia*. He attributes this to education and custom, which condition people to have certain emotional responses to their own actions:

<ext>

it is no wonder Sadness follows absolutely from all those acts which from custom are called *wrong*, and Joy, those which are called *right*. For from what has been said above we easily understand that this depends chiefly on education. Parents – by blaming the former acts, and often scolding their children on account of them, and on the other hand, by recommending and praising the latter acts – have brought it about that the emotions of Sadness were joined to the one kind of act, and those of Joy to the other.

Experience itself also confirms this. For not everyone has the same custom and Religion... according as each one has been educated, so he either repents of a deed or exults at being esteemed for it.⁵¹

</ext>

Spinoza seems to present this simply as a fact of experience: he does not explicitly criticise the effects of moral education in shaping affective habits. In broader context, though, we have seen that he associates both moralism and immorality – especially the kind that

accompanies superstitious religion – with the mistaken belief in free will. This is not merely a critique of Descartes, who on Spinoza’s view is reflecting the outlook that has developed within the Christian tradition, and which had in his time come to dominate that tradition. But there is perhaps a sense that Descartes, as a philosopher, should have known better.⁵²

2. *Acquiescentia* and the three kinds of cognition

Having clarified how Spinoza’s discussion of *acquiescentia in se ipso* responds to Descartes, we may now examine more closely the account of *acquiescentia* developed through the *Ethics*. Like any species of love or hate, *acquiescentia in se ipso* is an inherently cognitive affect, since it involves the idea of a cause. Thus Spinoza’s account of *acquiescentia* is structured according to his distinction between three kinds of cognition: (1) opinion or imagination, (2) reason, (3) intuitive knowledge.⁵³ The relationship between *acquiescentia* and these three kinds of cognition illuminates the continuity and coherence of Spinoza’s discussion of *acquiescentia*, on the one hand, and the complexity or “polyvalence” of the concept, on the other.⁵⁴ Using different English terms to translate *acquiescentia* as it appears and reappears through Parts III to V of the text obscures Spinoza’s use of *acquiescentia* to denote a single affect which varies according to the kind of cognition that produces it.⁵⁵

When *acquiescentia* is understood in terms of the three kinds of cognition, its significance within Spinoza’s philosophical system becomes clear. And it is not just that the three kinds of cognition illuminate *acquiescentia*; reciprocally, Spinoza’s account of *acquiescentia* illuminates the three kinds of cognition. In particular, it indicates the experiential qualities by which these kinds of cognition can be recognised and distinguished. It is through the different forms of *acquiescentia* that we *feel* the effects of the different kinds

of knowledge within our own being. To put it another way: we human beings live in relation to ourselves, with a certain understanding or awareness of ourselves, and this relationship always has an affective dimension. When it is based on imagination, *acquiescentia* is a hollow, volatile, egotistical satisfaction; when it is rooted in the second, rational kind of knowledge, it becomes a stable joy that can be shared with others; within the third kind of knowledge, *acquiescentia* signifies the feeling-quality of participation in God's eternity, giving content to the apparently abstract idea of intellectual love of God. And this affect, in its variable forms, links Spinoza's critique of free will, of Cartesian philosophy, and of superstition, with his account of true understanding and blessedness.

Throughout the *Ethics*, *acquiescentia* is used in a way that accurately reflects Spinoza's formal definition of this affect. According to this definition, *acquiescentia* is a joy accompanied by the idea of oneself as cause (or by the idea of an "internal cause"), a joy that arises when we consider ourselves and our power of acting.⁵⁶ All the instances of *acquiescentia* discussed in Parts III, IV and V consistently fit this description. But Spinoza states that some of these instances are *vana* (false, empty, vain, untrustworthy), while others are *vera* (true, genuine, properly named, well-founded). Since his definition of the affect encompasses both true and false *acquiescentia*, we have to look to the qualities of stillness and obedience signified by the word itself to provide the criteria for distinguishing them. If a joy accompanied by the idea of oneself as cause lacks these qualities, it must be *vana*. As we might expect of this cognitive affect, the inadequate understanding produced by the first kind of cognition gives rise to false *acquiescentia*, while the adequate understanding gained in the second and third kinds of knowledge generates true *acquiescentia*. But there are significant differences between the true *acquiescentia* arising from reason, and that arising from *scientia intuitiva*. Here, neither the definition of the affect nor the distinction between adequate and inadequate cognition can explain this difference: again, it is the particular qualities of

stillness and obedience conveyed by the word *acquiescentia* that provide the decisive criteria. So just as there are three kinds of cognition, so there are three kinds of *acquiescentia*. Let us examine each of these in turn.

(1) *Acquiescentia* of the first kind

We have already encountered this defective *acquiescentia* in considering Spinoza's critique of the equivalent Cartesian passion, *la satisfaction de soi-meme*. But here we will look more closely at how it relates to the "cognition of the first kind" based on "opinion or imagination."⁵⁷ When Spinoza introduces the affect of *acquiescentia in se ipso* at IIP30 and defines it for the first time, he connects it to imagination: "If someone has done something which he imagines affects others with Joy, he will be affected by Joy accompanied by the idea of himself as cause, or he will regard himself with Joy."⁵⁸ When he defines it again at IIP51, this time in conjunction with repentance, he emphasises that "the things which [a man] believes will make for Joy or Sadness, and which he therefore strives to promote or prevent, are often only imaginary," and links this with the "inconstancy" of human nature and judgement.⁵⁹ It is here that he adds that "Because men believe themselves free, these affects [of *acquiescentia in se ipso* and repentance] are very violent." Belief in free will is not the basis of imaginary thinking, but a particularly significant instance of it.

The first kind of cognition encompasses "opinion" as well as "imagination". Spinoza brings these two together at IIP53, where he asserts that "when the Mind considers itself and its power of acting, it rejoices, and does so the more, the more distinctly it imagines itself and its power of acting." In the corollary to this proposition, he points out that "this Joy is more and more encouraged the more a man imagines himself to be praised by others. For the more

he imagines himself to be praised by others, the greater the Joy with which he imagines himself to affect others.”⁶⁰ The joy of *acquiescentia* is conditioned by public opinion: by the values and attitudes of society in general, and of our own circle of acquaintances in particular. According to Spinoza, these opinions are often (though not necessarily) prejudices and superstitions. Because the affects of *acquiescentia* and *gloria* (Curley: ‘love of esteem’) are closely connected, our relationship to ourselves is intimately bound up with our relationships to others.⁶¹ This means that the problems associated with imaginative *acquiescentia* are often compounded by social influences.

Spinoza’s general account of the affects in Part III emphasises their instability. Summing up this discussion in the scholium to EIIP59, he links the affects with “vacillations of mind” – *affectus, animique fluctuationes* – and writes that “from what has been said it is clear that we are driven about in many ways by external causes, and that, like waves on the sea, driven by contrary winds, we toss about, not knowing our outcome or our fate.”⁶² Similarly, at EVP2 Spinoza seems to equate affect with vacillation or agitation: here he refers to *animi commotionem, seu affectum* and suggests that the affects of love and hate cause *animi fluctuationes*.⁶³ With regard to *acquiescentia* (of the first kind) in particular, he identifies two related consequences of this instability: it makes individuals anxious within themselves, and troublesome to others.

Spinoza hints at the anxiety-provoking character of *acquiescentia* in the scholium to IIP55, where we find the third definition of the affect, this time *Philautia, vel Acquiscentia in se ipso*, as “Joy arising from considering ourselves.”⁶⁴ Because this joy “is renewed as often as a man considers his virtues, or his power of acting, it also happens that everyone is anxious [*gestiat*] to tell his own deeds, and to show off his powers, both of body and of mind.” Spinoza adds here that “men, for this reason, are very troublesome to one another [*homines hac de causa sibi invicem molesti sint*].”⁶⁵ He makes this point much more

explicitly, though, when he returns to the subject of false, empty *acquiescentia* in Part IV.

Here, it is opinion rather than imagination that emerges as the distinctive feature of the self-understanding that this *acquiescentia* is based upon:

<ext>

The love of esteem [*Gloria*] which is called empty [*vana*] is self-esteem [*acquiescentia in se ipso*] that is encouraged only by the opinion of the multitude. When that ceases, the *acquiescentia in se ipso* ceases, i.e. (by P52s), the highest good that each one loves. That is why he who exults at being esteemed by the multitude is made anxious daily, strives, sacrifices and schemes [*quotidianâ curâ anxius nitatur, faciat, experiatur*], in order to preserve his reputation. For the multitude is fickle and inconstant; unless one's reputation is guarded, it is quickly destroyed.⁶⁶

</ext>

As well as making themselves anxious, people who pursue this *acquiescentia* become aggressively competitive with others. Indeed, those who succeed in gaining it may be the worst of all. In this struggle for *acquiescentia*, “the one who at last emerges as victor exults more in having harmed the other than in having benefited himself.”⁶⁷ Spinoza emphasises in this passage that it is precisely because *acquiescentia* is the “highest thing we can hope for,” “the highest good that each one loves,” that the false *acquiescentia* arising from inadequate understanding has such destructive consequences: “since this struggle is over a good thought to be the highest this gives rise to a monstrous lust of each to crush the other in any way possible.”⁶⁸ Here, then, Spinoza argues that *acquiescentia* is as volatile as the opinions it rests on, generating agitation within both individuals and communities. In other words, it not only fails to produce the *quies* that belongs to genuine *acquiescentia*, but encourages unrest. It is

not surprising that Spinoza concludes this paragraph by stating that “This love of esteem, or *acquiescentia*, then, is really empty, because it is nothing [*Est igitur haec gloria, seu acquiescentia reverâ vana, quia nulla est*].”⁶⁹

Right at the end of the *Ethics*, when he contrasts the “wise man” with the “ignorant man”, Spinoza returns to this idea that the person who lacks adequate knowledge is restless, anxious, agitated. The ignorant person is “troubled in many ways [*multis modis agitur*] by external causes, and unable ever to possess true peace of mind [*vera animi acquiescentia*].”⁷⁰ Here the link between agitation, subjection to external causes, and false *acquiescentia* becomes more explicit than hitherto – it was implied in IVP55, and in EIIIP59 we heard that “we are driven about in many ways by external causes” due to the “vacillations” of the affects in general. All human beings are influenced by external causes: Spinoza thinks that it is impossible not to be.⁷¹ But being subject to forces beyond our control – so that they limit our power of acting, and so that we feel their effects within us – does not necessarily mean that we are “driven about” and thus rendered unstable by them. The ignorant man described at the conclusion to the *Ethics* is dominated by external causes: he is so entirely determined by them that they constitute his very existence, so that “as soon as he ceases to be acted on, he ceases to be.”⁷²

This emphasis on the power of external causes might appear at odds with the definition of *acquiescentia*, which as we have seen refers to the idea of an internal cause, i.e. the idea of oneself as a cause. Doesn’t the “empty” *acquiescentia* that depends on external factors, such as the approval of other people, simply fail to qualify as *acquiescentia* – of any kind? This is not the case, because empty *acquiescentia* does involve an idea of oneself, as internal cause, but this idea is itself subject to external causes. In other words, it is a “mutilated” and “confused” idea in which one’s own power and activity; one’s assumptions about the moral status of certain actions, based on custom and education; the opinions and

reactions of others; and one's (perhaps mistaken) perception of those opinions and reactions are all mixed up together. This is certainly an inadequate idea of oneself, produced by a combination of imagination and opinion – a self-image, we might say – but it is still an idea of oneself, and thus of an internal cause.

The link between *acquiescentia* and subjection to external causes indicates that a certain conception of obedience, or indeed acquiescence, helps to distinguish false from true *acquiescentia*. We are perhaps most used to a heteronomous notion of obedience, signifying submission to an external authority. Relatedly, 'acquiescence' usually refers to a rather passive acceptance of another's will that is reluctant, helpless, or perhaps indifferent. This was equally true in the 17th century: Hobbes, for example, when discussing the interpretation of scripture in *De Cive* (1642) uses the verb *acquiescere* to describe heteronomous obedience to an external authority: *authoritati externaе acquiescere, non constituere civitatem per se, sed esse externi illius subditos*.⁷³ But Spinoza's use of *acquiescentia* suggests a much more affirmative conception of obedience, which encompasses both following the laws of one's own nature, and wise acceptance of the necessity of divine law and (in other words) of the nature of which we are a part. This positive concept of obedience is itself complex, since it includes *acquiescentia* of the second and third kinds, and accommodates differences between them. I will call this 'immanent obedience', in contrast to the heteronomous obedience of false *acquiescentia*. (When we examine the two kinds of true *acquiescentia*, we will see that the immanent obedience belonging to the second kind of knowledge can be called autonomous, while the immanent obedience belonging to the third kind of knowledge is characterised by dependence on God.)⁷⁴

In the case of false *acquiescentia*, a person fails to follow the laws of his own nature insofar as he is determined by external causes. At the same time, he disobeys – that is to say, he refuses to accept – natural or divine necessity, insofar as he holds on to belief in free will.

His *acquiescentia in se ipso* fails to live up to its name, because it is not “in itself” but subject to external influence, even though it involves an idea of himself. Because his idea of himself is an inadequate self-image, mediated by the inconstant opinions of the multitude, the ‘self’ he acquiesces in is not really his self at all. According to a distinctive Spinozist concept of immanent obedience, then, false *acquiescentia* is characterised by a lack of obedience as well as by a lack of stillness.

(2) *Acquiescentia* of the second kind

As we have seen, in *Ethics* III Spinoza introduces *acquiescentia* as closely associated with imagination, and his discussion of the affect concerns either *acquiescentia* of the first kind, or a more general and neutral conception of *acquiescentia* which is not linked to any particular kind of cognition. In Part IV, however, he states that “*Acquiescentia in se ipso* can arise from reason, and only that *acquiescentia in se ipso* which does arise from reason is the greatest there can be.”⁷⁵ He demonstrates this proposition by reminding the reader that “man’s true power of acting, *or* virtue, is reason itself (by IIP3), which man considers clearly and distinctly.”⁷⁶ And in elaborating it, Spinoza hints at both obedience and stillness. Concerning the former, he writes that “while a man considers himself, he perceives nothing clearly and distinctly, *or* adequately, except those things which follow from his power of understanding.”⁷⁷ Concerning the latter, he emphasises that *acquiescentia* is (like virtue) an end in itself: it is “really the highest thing we can hope for” because “no one strives to preserve his being for the sake of any end.”⁷⁸ We need to put these remarks together with others in the *Ethics* to see how they indicate the qualities of obedience and stillness that belong to true *acquiescentia*. Let us begin with obedience.

I have already suggested that Spinoza's conception of adequate *acquiescentia* involves an affirmative obedience to oneself, understood as following the laws of one's own nature. At EIIID2 he defines action (as opposed to passivity) in these terms: "we act when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause, i.e. when something in us or outside us follows from our nature."⁷⁹ He echoes this in Part IV, and links it explicitly with the second kind of knowledge: "acting from reason is nothing but doing those things which follow from the necessity of our nature, considered in itself alone (by 3p2 and D2)."⁸⁰ So when at EIVP52 Spinoza describes true *acquiescentia* in terms of a self-reflection that consists of "those things which follow from [one's] power of understanding," he echoes his earlier reference to what "follows from our nature," and anticipates his description of rational action, a few proposition later, as "doing those things which follow from the necessity of our nature." *Acquiescentia in se ipso* is the affective, experiential aspect of obeying, i.e. expressing, our nature "considered in itself alone."

Spinoza refers back to EIVP52 when, in Part V, he writes that "the highest satisfaction of mind [*summa animi acquiescentia*] stems from the right principle of living."⁸¹ We should "keep this in mind," he advises, together with the fact that "men, like other things, act from the necessity of nature."⁸² While the "fiction" of free will exacerbates the affects of love and hate, recognition of the way in which all beings follow "the necessity of nature" produces the peace of *acquiescentia*. This acquiescence in necessity is also emphasised in the Appendix to Part IV, where Spinoza suggests that it has a calming effect, even when we are subject to the vicissitudes of fortune:

<ext>

We do not have absolute power to adapt things outside us to our use. Nevertheless, we shall bear calmly [*æquo animo feremus*] those things which happen to us contrary to what the

principle of our advantage demands, if we are conscious that...we are a part of the whole of nature, whose order we follow. If we understand this clearly and distinctly, that part of us which is defined by understanding, i.e. the better part of us, will be entirely satisfied [*plane acquiescet*] with this, and will strive to persevere in that satisfaction [*acquiescentia*]. For insofar as we understand, we can want nothing except what is necessary, nor absolutely be satisfied [*in veris acquiescere*] with anything except what is true.⁸³

</ext>

This passage echoes remarks about calm acceptance of “matters of fortune” at the end of Part II, in the lengthy scholium to P49. Here Spinoza indicates “how much knowledge of [the will’s necessity] is to our advantage in life.” He explains that this understanding of necessity “teaches us how we must bear ourselves concerning matters of fortune, or things which are not in our power, that is, concerning things which do not follow from our nature – that we must expect and bear calmly [*æquo animo expectare, et ferre*] both good fortune and bad.” He adds here that “all things follow from God’s eternal decree with the same eternal necessity as from the essence of a triangle it follows that its three angles are equal to two right angles.”⁸⁴

We can, then, identify two aspects of the immanent obedience of true *acquiescentia*. On the one hand, we actively follow the laws of our own nature when we are rational and virtuous (these being the same, for Spinoza). On the other hand, we actively follow the laws of nature as a whole when we are “conscious” that we are part of nature, and thus subject to it.⁸⁵ Although the former aspect relates to what is within our control, and the latter aspect to what lies beyond it, both are based on adequate understanding, which is itself an expression of our own power, and thus a source of joy. Both, then, can be accurately described as true *acquiescentia*.

In the passage from EIV's Appendix quoted above, the obedience and stillness of *acquiescentia* are brought together. The person who obeys necessity is able to "bear [it] calmly." Closely connected to this is a "satisfaction [*acquiescentia*]" that "wants nothing except what is necessary," i.e. nothing except what *is*. This suggests a kind of desire that rests in itself, rather than seeking something that is lacking. Spinoza has already outlined such a desire, in discussing love at the end of Part III. Here he explains that the "will to join [oneself] to the thing loved [consists in] a Satisfaction [*sed per voluntatem me Acquiescentiam intelligere*] in the lover on account of the presence of the thing loved, by which the lover's Joy is strengthened or at least encouraged."⁸⁶ This "will" rests content with what it has; because it does not want anything else, it can rest (or acquiesce) in the present moment.

The stillness experienced in *acquiescentia* of the second kind is a quality of stability and equanimity. In contrast to the emotional volatility that accompanies the first kind of knowledge, the feeling-quality of adequate understanding is much more even (*æquo*) and peaceful. When the mind thinks about "those things which it perceives clearly and distinctly, and with which it is fully satisfied [*plane acquiescit*]," then not only will the affects of "Love, Hate, etc." be destroyed (here Spinoza refers us back to his discussion of *animi commotionem* and *animi fluctuationes*), but also "the appetites, or Desires, which usually arises from such an affect, cannot be excessive."⁸⁷ The point here is not that desire is lessened by reason, but that rational desire is such that there cannot be too much of it: "a desire which arises from reason...is the very essence, or nature, of man", and it makes no sense to say that human nature "could exceed itself, or could do more than it can".⁸⁸

It is important to emphasise that the quietude of adequate *acquiescentia* is not inert. On the contrary, it is active as opposed to passive, and self-expressive as opposed to self-restricting. And, given the interdependence of human beings on one another, the internal

stability of individuals whose *acquiescentia* comes from the second kind of knowledge will be conducive to political stability – and *vice versa*.⁸⁹ If the nature of each being is its desire or striving, then adequate *acquiescentia* does not slow or halt this striving, but stabilises it, making it more immanent and less restless. On this point, we can note that in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* Spinoza uses the verb *acquiescere* to signify agreement or concord between people, in the context of a discussion of religious conflict: “people do not agree about everything [*nec omnes in omnibus aequae acquiescere*]; rather opinions govern men in different ways.”⁹⁰

The mental stability of *acquiescentia* has a bodily correlate in the affect that Spinoza describes as *hilaritas* (Curley: ‘cheerfulness’). In his “Definitions of the Affects” Spinoza seems rather dismissive of the affects “chiefly related to the body,” and does not define them.⁹¹ Earlier in Part III, however, he states that “the idea of any thing that increases or diminishes, aids or restrains, our body’s power of acting, increases or diminishes, aids or restrains, our mind’s power of thinking.”⁹² And, indeed, he describes *hilaritas* as “the affect of joy which is related to the mind and body at once.”⁹³ In contrast to pleasure – which is also a joy relating to both mind and body – *hilaritas* affects all parts of the body equally.⁹⁴ It is a condition of physical stability or equilibrium, just as genuine *acquiescentia* involves mental stability and equanimity. When the body is affected by *hilaritas*, “all its parts maintain the same proportion of motion and rest to one another.”⁹⁵ Spinoza asserts that *hilaritas* “is always good, and cannot be excessive” – since stability cannot be excessive.⁹⁶ But he reflects that this stability is very rare, “more easily conceived than observed.”⁹⁷ Laurent Bove, who couples *acquiescentia* with *hilaritas* to accentuate the bodily aspects of adequate knowledge, and its blessedness, describes *hilaritas* as simultaneously restful and active. It is, he writes, “a kind of joy at rest [*une joie en quelque sorte en repos*]...but constitutive, active... the equilibrium in rest [*l’équilibre en repos*] of self-love is here immanent to the power of acting

itself... It is an active and creative [*féconde*] immobility.”⁹⁸ In this way, *hilaritas* is very much the physical aspect of *acquiescentia* of the second kind: it is “the adequate expression of...the *acquiescentia in se ipso* originating in reason, and of the essential equilibrium that Contentment encompasses.”⁹⁹ For Bove, Spinoza’s concept of *hilaritas* “indicates that the ethical goal is the *acquiescentia in se ipso* of the human being as a whole, equally and positively affected in all the parts of his body and his spirit.”¹⁰⁰

(3) *Acquiescentia* of the third kind

Scientia intuitiva, Spinoza’s “third kind of cognition,” is a direct, immediate comprehension of God and of the way all things follow necessarily from God’s nature.¹⁰¹ What is known through this intuitive knowledge is the being-in-God of each singular thing: “Insofar as our mind knows itself and the body under a species of eternity, it necessarily has knowledge of God, and knows that it is in God.”¹⁰² This being-in-God is the basic principle of Spinoza’s ontology. He asserts at EIP15 that “Whatever is, is in God”, but elsewhere he expresses the same idea in the first person by appealing to the New Testament text of 1 John, “By this we know that we dwell in [God], and he in us.”¹⁰³ The *acquiescentia* accompanying this knowledge that all things – but perhaps especially oneself – are in God shares the qualities of stability, equanimity, and obedience to one’s own nature that distinguish *acquiescentia* of the second kind from its false counterpart. But it also differs from the *acquiescentia* that is based solely on reason. *Acquiescentia* of the third kind is constituted by consciousness of being-in-God, and it is very closely related to the intellectual love of God in which divine and human consciousness (and joy) come together.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* Spinoza, having cited Paul’s Letter to the Galatians on the “fruits of the Holy Spirit,” goes so

far as to suggest that “the Holy Spirit...is in truth simply the mental peace [*animi acquiescentiam*] that arises in the mind from good actions.”¹⁰⁵

At EVP27 Spinoza writes that “the greatest satisfaction of Mind [*Mentis acquiescentia*] there can be arises from this third kind of knowledge.”¹⁰⁶ This echoes his claim in Part IV that “only that *acquiescentia in se ipso* which [arises] from reason is the greatest there can be.”¹⁰⁷ This does not seem to differentiate *acquiescentia* of the third kind from that of the second kind. We can note a change in terminology: here in Part V Spinoza uses the phrase *Mentis acquiescentia* for the first time (he repeats it at EVP32).¹⁰⁸ However, he reverts to *acquiescentia animi* in the final proposition of the text, which describes the “blessedness” arising from intuitive knowledge.¹⁰⁹ Spinoza also uses *animi acquiescentia* (together with the verb *acquiescere*) in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* to define blessedness: “true salvation and happiness [*vera salus & beatitudo*] consists in our intellect’s genuine acquiescence [*vera animi acquiescentia*] and we truly acquiesce [*vera acquiescimus*] only in what we understand very clearly.”¹¹⁰ So we cannot infer the distinguishing features of *acquiescentia* of the third kind from Spinoza’s references to *Mentis acquiescentia*.

The Demonstration of EVP27 indicates that – as we might expect, given the nature of the third kind of cognition – this *acquiescentia* differs from the second kind by its connection to God. Having just argued that “the greatest virtue of the mind, that is, the mind’s power, *or* nature, *or* its greatest striving, is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge,”¹¹¹ Spinoza explains that “he who knows things by this kind of knowledge passes to the greatest human perfection, and consequently is affected with the greatest joy, accompanied by the idea of himself and his virtue. Therefore the greatest satisfaction [*acquiescentia*] there can be arises from this kind of knowledge.”¹¹² In this third kind of cognition, however, the idea of oneself includes the idea of God: the mind “knows that it is in God and is conceived through

God.”¹¹³ This means that *acquiescentia* of the third kind is accompanied by the idea of God as well as by the idea of oneself:

<ext>

Whatever we understand by the third kind of knowledge we take pleasure in [*eo delectamur*], and our pleasure is accompanied by the idea of God as cause.

From this kind of knowledge there arises the greatest satisfaction of Mind [*Mentis acquiescentia*] there can be (by P27), i.e. (by Def. Aff. XXV), Joy; this Joy is accompanied by the idea of oneself, and consequently (by P30) it is also accompanied by the idea of God, as its cause, q.e.d.¹¹⁴

</ext>

Spinoza introduces his concept of intellectual love of God in the Corollary to this proposition: “from this kind of knowledge there arises (by P32) Joy, accompanied by the idea of God as its cause, i.e., Love of God, not insofar as we imagine him as present (by P29), but insofar as we understand God to be eternal. And this is what I call intellectual love of God.”¹¹⁵

According to Part III of the *Ethics* the affects of *acquiescentia* and love are distinguishable insofar as the former is a joy accompanied by the idea of an internal cause (i.e. the idea of oneself), while the latter is a joy accompanied by the idea of an external cause (i.e. the idea of another). But the Demonstration of EVP32, quoted above, suggests that in the third kind of cognition this distinction between internal and external causes is unsettled. In place of two distinct ideas – an idea of oneself, and an idea of God – intuitive knowledge offers a single idea: of oneself as “in” God, *or* (to put it another way) of God’s nature as

containing and expressing *this* singular existing being. This single idea is an immediate awareness of being-in-God. Spinoza makes this more explicit at VP36:

<ext>

The mind's intellectual love of God is the very love of God by which God loves himself... It is an action by which the mind contemplates itself, with the accompanying idea of God as its cause (by P32 and P32C), that is, an action by which God, insofar as he can be explained through the human mind, contemplates himself... Whether this love is related to God or to the mind, it can rightly be called satisfaction of mind [*animi acquiescentia*], which is not really distinguished from Glory. For insofar as it is related to God, it is joy (if I may still be permitted to use this term), accompanied by the idea of himself [as its cause]. And similarly insofar as it is related to the mind.¹¹⁶

</ext>

So although the intellectual love of God can be distinguished conceptually from *acquiescentia* of the third kind, phenomenologically they are inseparable. Both are a joy arising from the idea of one's being-in-God, in other words a joyful awareness of being-in-God.¹¹⁷

In *Ethics* V, then, *acquiescentia* of the third kind and the intellectual love of God come together to constitute the affective dimension of the third kind of knowledge. Given that the intellectual love of God has already been much discussed by scholars,¹¹⁸ we might wonder what is to be gained by focusing on *acquiescentia* of the third kind. But there are several features of this affect particular to the concept of *acquiescentia*. Most obviously, the way it is used throughout the *Ethics* ties it explicitly to the existential fact of our relatedness to ourselves: the fact that we always operate with a certain self-understanding, which has a

certain emotional tone. Furthermore, the two distinctive features of *acquiescentia* that allow Spinoza to contrast true and false *acquiescentia* give content to the feeling-quality of the affect most commonly referred to as intellectual love of God. Unlike *amor Dei intellectualis*, *acquiescentia* conveys stillness, peace, rest. Just as these feeling-qualities provide a criterion for recognising true *acquiescentia*, so they fill out a phenomenological account of the blessedness associated particularly with the third kind of knowledge. And the idea of obedience that is invoked by *acquiescentia* gives content to both the being-in-God and the “freedom” attained in blessedness.

We have seen that the stillness belonging to *acquiescentia* of the second kind is not a state of immobility, but of stability, which contrasts with the instability accompanying the first kind of knowledge. It is an equanimity of mind, mirrored by equilibrium in the body (*hilaritas*). This stability is a prerequisite for gaining the third kind of knowledge (and thus for enjoying all that arises from it), but the stillness of *acquiescentia* of the third kind must differ from it. *Acquiescentia* of the second kind involves a stability of duration, while *acquiescentia* of the third kind involves the stillness of eternity.¹¹⁹

This highest kind of *acquiescentia* is closely tied to eternity when Spinoza describes “the wise man” at the very end of the *Ethics*: “the wise man, insofar as he is considered as such, is hardly troubled in spirit [*vix animo movetur*], but being, by a certain eternal necessity, conscious [*consci*us] of himself, and of God, and of things, he never ceases to be, but always possesses true peace of mind [*sed semper vera animi acquiescentia*].¹²⁰ “Never ceasing to be” and “always possessing true peace of mind” are presented here as two aspects of a single condition, or even as two ways of describing the same condition. These closing comments reinforce Spinoza’s suggestion, a few propositions earlier, that *acquiescentia* of the third kind is linked to what “remains” of the mind after the body perishes: “because (by P27) the highest *acquiescentia* there can be arises from the third kind of knowledge, it

follows from this that the Mind can be of such a nature that the part of the Mind which we have shown perishes with the body (see P21) is of no moment in relation to what remains.”¹²¹ This is not the place to reflect on Spinoza’s account of the eternity of the mind, which I have discussed in detail elsewhere.¹²² But we can consider how this connection with eternity qualifies *acquiescentia* of the third kind, and conversely how this *acquiescentia* gives an indication of the phenomenological quality of eternal life. Indeed, this illuminates Spinoza’s enigmatic claim that “we feel and know by experience that we are eternal,” for the uninterrupted peace and stillness that characterise *acquiescentia* of the third kind is the feeling of eternity.¹²³

The three kinds of *acquiescentia* signify three different qualities of thinking: the unsettled, confused, anxious thinking of imagination and opinion; the stable, ordered thinking of reason; and the intuitive thinking that understands things immediately, as they are in God, *sub specie aeternitatis*. The thinking that takes place in the second kind of knowledge is a process of reasoning that traces, step by step, the logical connections between ideas and the causal connections between things. Intuitive thinking, however, is not a process: it grasps the truth immediately. This difference between the second and third kinds of cognition is illustrated by Spinoza’s example of finding a fourth proportional number, given a sequence of three numbers. In the second kind of cognition, the number is found by applying a Euclidian principle, once one has understood the demonstration of this principle. In the third kind of cognition, the fourth proportional is seen “in one glance.”¹²⁴ So although this intuitive kind of thinking is certainly an activity, it is not a process. It sees what “follows” from God not as a sequence of effects, but as a simple, intelligible inherence or manifestation.

This interpretation of *acquiescentia* of the third kind may be supported by a remark concerning the human intellect in Spinoza’s letter to Oldenburg of September 1661, where Spinoza lists the errors he finds in the philosophies of Descartes and Bacon. He criticises

Bacon in particular for placing certain limitations on the human intellect – a criticism that, in light of Spinoza’s mature epistemology, amounts to the claim that Bacon fails to recognise the possibility of the third kind of knowledge.¹²⁵ Spinoza lists three key Baconian limitations, the third one being the assumption that “the human understanding is unquiet, it cannot stop or rest [*quod intellectus humanus gliscat, neque consistere, aut acquiescere possit*].”¹²⁶ Here the verb *acquiescere* is used to signify the intellect’s capacity for repose. By putting *acquiescere* in contrast with *gliscere*, which means to swell up, blaze up, burst out, Spinoza seems to suggest that in the third kind of knowledge the mind is emptied of the clamouring crowd of images, “common notions”, and “ideas of the properties of things” which it uses for thinking according to the first and second kinds of knowledge.¹²⁷ Insofar as *acquiescentia* of the third kind is an affect, it signifies the feeling-quality of intuitive thinking. It is not, then, simply an absence of emotional disturbance – although of course it is this as well.

While *acquiescentia* of the third kind gives the deepest rest and peace, it also expresses the highest degree of activity and striving. Spinoza states that “the greatest virtue of the mind, that is, the mind’s power, *or* nature, *or* its greatest striving, is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge.”¹²⁸ Just two propositions later he asserts that “the greatest *acquiescentia* there can be arises from this kind of knowledge.”¹²⁹ There is something paradoxical about this, which Spinoza seems to acknowledge. The language of the affects becomes problematic in the third kind of cognition, and there is inevitably an element of “feigning” in speaking of an eternal joy, and of the “passage” to the third kind of *acquiescentia*.¹³⁰

Just as the stillness of *acquiescentia* of the third kind is connected to the consciousness of things (including oneself) as being-in-God, *sub specie aeternitatis*, so the obedience aspect of this *acquiescentia* relates to the necessity of God’s nature. While *acquiescentia* of the second kind involves an affirmative, expressive ‘obedience’ to the laws

of one's own nature, the highest *acquiescentia* sees these laws as divine laws, so that obedience to oneself becomes indistinguishable from obedience to God. Obedience to the God of superstitious religion, mediated by a confused amalgamation of imagination and received opinion, is inevitably a heteronomous submission. In this obedience, one's own power of acting is surrendered to a God envisaged as external, and to a human authority which competes with one's power, and diminishes it. *Acquiescentia* of the second kind reverses this weakening effect by making obedience immanent and autonomous. But it is in *acquiescentia* of the third kind, where one's dependence on God is the core truth grasped in intuitive knowledge, that the highest human freedom is found. This is a different kind of autonomy, combining fidelity to one's own finite power with the understanding that this is at once a dependent part, and an expression, of an infinite power.¹³¹

Thus Spinoza's concept of *acquiescentia* is central to his critique of Descartes's account of human freedom. By correlating this affect to the three kinds of cognition, he relegates Cartesian *acquiescentia* to the first, inadequate kind of cognition, and argues that it is not only founded on error, but psychologically, spiritually and socially harmful. Spinoza employs the concept of *acquiescentia* to both critique and replace the Cartesian free will that he rejects as a "fiction", for *acquiescentia* indicates a freedom that is identical to necessity. Insofar as this is a "human freedom" – as the title of *Ethics* V indicates – it participates in divine freedom. "God acts from the laws of his nature alone, and is compelled by no one," and "God alone is a free cause, for God alone exists only from the necessity of his nature."¹³² But a human being can approximate this freedom-in-necessity through his *acquiescentia*, "being, by a certain eternal necessity, conscious of himself, and of God, and of things."

Conclusion: *acquiescentia* in theory and in practice

By now it should be clear why it is misleading to attribute to Spinoza the view that “self-esteem is the highest thing we can hope for.” Most of the discussion, in *Ethics* III and IV, of the affect that Curley calls ‘self-esteem’ concerns *acquiescentia* of the first kind. We have seen that this *acquiescentia in se ipso* is defined in terms of imagination and opinion, which produce “mutilated and confused” cognition. This may appear to be a positive affect in contrast with humility and repentance, since it signifies an increase in power, and thus is a joy, not a sadness. But *acquiescentia* of the first kind is “empty”, “vain”, precisely insofar as it falls short of the qualities of stillness and immanent obedience that constitute “true” *acquiescentia*. That is to say, it is empty because it is volatile, anxiety-provoking, and heteronomous. One might as well say that ‘inadequate (or, more bluntly, false) *acquiescentia* is the highest thing we can hope for.’ And Spinoza does not, of course, think that.¹³³

As a joy accompanied by the idea of oneself, *acquiescentia* signifies the feeling-quality of the human being’s self-relatedness. This affect can be true or false – in the sense of authentic or inauthentic – depending on whether it arises from adequate or inadequate self-understanding. Just as Spinoza distinguishes three kinds of cognition, the first kind inadequate and the second and third kinds adequate, so there are three corresponding kinds of *acquiescentia*. The name for this affect indicates the quality of stillness or repose (*quies*), and in moving from the first to the third kind we see an increase in stillness that is also, crucially, an increase in activity or power. This empowerment can be elucidated through a distinctive conception of immanent obedience: inadequate *acquiescentia* falls short of this criterion, while adequate *acquiescentia* fulfils it.

Tracing these correlations between *acquiescentia* and the three kinds of cognition brings into view the three-fold structure of Spinoza’s account of *acquiescentia*.

Corresponding to the three kinds of cognition –

(1) imagination (2) reason (3) intuition

– are three characteristics of *acquiescentia*, according to the criterion of stillness:

(1) agitation (2) stability (3) rest

The psychological states corresponding to these are:

(1) anxiety (2) equanimity (3) peace

And the forms of obedience are:

(1) heteronomy (2) autonomy (3) being-in-God

This three-fold structure exposes the error of Poiret's claim that Spinozist *acquiescentia* is "an abominable vice, head and root of all of them, and true atheism." This critique is based on the assumption that Spinoza describes as our highest good an affect which is directly opposed to the Christian virtues of humility and repentance. But the *acquiescentia in se ipso* that is distinguished from these other affects is *acquiescentia* of the first kind. This *acquiescentia* belongs, together with humility and repentance, within the domain of the imagination – the basis of superstitious religion – and so these affects are, according to Spinoza, equally volatile, confused, and debilitated. So Spinoza does not simply invert the traditional Christian schema of virtue and vice. Rather, he shows why this whole evaluative schema rests on misunderstanding. From this point of view, Poiret's critique is itself rooted in

cognition of the first kind. It is a symptom of the superstition that Spinoza responds to, and the account of adequate *acquiescentia* developed through *Ethics* IV and V is an important part of this response. In fact, the highest kind of *acquiescentia* is far from atheistic and hubristic.¹³⁴ On the contrary: it is distinguished by an obedience that is based on consciousness of being-in-God. And this yields a certain kind of humility (although Spinoza does not call it this), since it is a consciousness of ontological dependence on God. Of course, this ‘humility’ is not a feeling of weakness or smallness, but a feeling of the highest degree of power or activity that a human being can express, by virtue of “participation in the divine nature.”¹³⁵

Spinoza’s definition of *acquiescentia* indicates the basic existential fact of human self-relatedness, and this affect, we have seen, is at the heart of his conception of the highest human good. This situates Spinoza’s practical philosophy within the ethical tradition described by Michel Foucault as “care for the self.”¹³⁶ Through his account of *acquiescentia*, Spinoza shows how our self-relationship can be constituted heteronomously, and thus disempowered; he also indicates the possibility of a more empowering self-relation based on true self-understanding. Much more could be said about Spinoza’s contribution to the conception of philosophy as practice accentuated by Foucault, and explored by thinkers such as Pierre Hadot and, more recently, Peter Sloterdijk. Elsewhere I have shown how *Ethics* V offers an account of practice that puts the habit-producing operations of imaginative thinking outlined in *Ethics* II in the service of adequate knowledge.¹³⁷ The theoretical discussion of *acquiescentia* set out in this paper needs to be developed further by showing how true *acquiescentia* might be practiced. In the *Ethics* Spinoza suggests certain techniques for cultivating this affect, while others might be inferred from his analysis of *acquiescentia*. There is no space here to elaborate on these practices. But completing this work will place

Spinoza's *Ethics* in a tradition of "philosophy as a way of life" informed by both Christian and Stoic spiritual exercises.

¹ *E* IVP52schol.

² Poiret, *Cogitationes Rationales*, 161. On Poiret's critique of Spinoza, see Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 474-5; Cooper, *Secular Powers*, 77-94.

³ Curley suggests that 'self-satisfaction' is a "reasonable" translation of *acquiescentia in se ipso*, but explains that since this "has acquired negative connotations which are inappropriate", 'self-esteem', or alternatively 'self-approval', are preferable: see Curley (ed.), *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1, 655.

⁴ See especially Rutherford, "Salvation as a State of Mind: The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza's Ethics"; LeBuffe, *From Bondage to Freedom*, 194-208; Cooper, *Secular Powers*, 91-104. Rutherford acknowledges that *acquiescentia in se ipso* "carries the more literal meaning of 'contentment with oneself'", but argues for retaining Curley's translation on the grounds that "[self-esteem] makes better sense of the conceptual relations Spinoza establishes in Parts II and IV between *acquiescentia in se ipso*, *humilitas*, *superbia*, and *gloria*" – see "Salvation as a State of Mind: The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza's Ethics," 451-2, and especially note 8.

⁵ EVP27, EVP42. See Cooper, *Secular Powers*, 92.

⁶ In this paper I follow Yitzhak Melamed's decision to translate *cognition* as 'cognition' rather than 'knowledge', "since for Spinoza *cognition* may well be inadequate and false." See Melamed, "Mapping the Labyrinth of Spinoza's *Scientia Intuitiva*," 100.

⁷ See Frankfurt, *Taking Ourselves Seriously and Getting It Right*, 17.

⁸ Deegan (ed.), *Ethics*, trans. George Eliot, 192. See, more recently, Wilson, "Spinoza's theory of knowledge," 127: "'Self-contentment' is a correct, but somehow inadequate, English rendering [of *acquiescentia in se ipso*]."

⁹ Rutherford, “Salvation as a State of Mind: The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza’s Ethics,” 452.

¹⁰ Wolff, *Gesammelte Werke*, II-5 (1968) §754, 568. See Totaro, “*Acquiescentia* dans la cinquième partie de l’*Ethique* de Spinoza,” 66.

¹¹ This edition is *Passiones Animae, per renatum Descartes. Gallice ab ipso conscriptae, nunc autem in exterorum gratiam Latina civitate donatae Ab H.D.M.I.V.L.*, Amstelodami, 1650. The translation has also been attributed to Henri Desmarets’s father, Samuel: see Dibon, “En marge de la Préface a la traduction latine des *Passions de l’ame* de Descartes”; Voss, “How Spinoza enumerated the Affects,” 167.

¹² See Totaro, “*Acquiescentia* dans la cinquième partie de l’*Ethique* de Spinoza,” 65-7.

¹³ For a comparison of the French and Latin texts, see Totaro, “*Acquiescentia* dans la cinquième partie de l’*Ethique* de Spinoza,” 68.

¹⁴ Descartes, *Oeuvres*, 471.

¹⁵ See Totaro, “*Acquiescentia* dans la cinquième partie de l’*Ethique* de Spinoza”; Voss, “How Spinoza enumerated the affects.” On the reception of Spinoza’s account of the passions in relation to the Cartesian background, see Steenbakkers, “Lodewijk Meyer’s catalogue of the passions,” 103-128. It should be noted, however, that Desmaret’s interpretative decision regarding *acquiescentia* puts a small but significant distance between Spinoza and Descartes. It is unlikely that Descartes, who died in 1650, read and authorised Desmarets’s Latin translation of his text (see Voss, “On the authority of the *Passiones Animae*”). And it is unlikely that Spinoza read the original French text of the *Passions*. In this case, Spinoza would not have known that *acquiescentia* translated *la satisfaction*, and indeed he might never have wondered about the French original. He may well have taken *acquiescentia* at face value, as carrying connotations of stillness and rest, acceptance and obedience. He certainly exploits these connotations in responding to what he could have reasonably taken to be the Cartesian account of *acquiescentia in se ipso*.

¹⁶ See *PWD* 351-2, 396-7.

¹⁷ Descartes, *Passions of the Soul*, art. 63; *PWD* 351.

¹⁸ *Passions of the Soul*, art. 190; *PWD* 396.

¹⁹ *E* IIP30schol., *E* IIIDef.Aff.XXV.

²⁰ *Passions of the Soul*, art. 191; *PWD* 397.

²¹ *E* IIP30schol.

²² *Passions of the Soul*, art. 63, art. 191; *PWD* 352, 396-7.

²³ *Passions of the Soul*, art. 190; *PWD* 396.

²⁴ *E* III, “General Definition of the Affects”; P59schol.

²⁵ *E* VP42schol.

²⁶ *Passions of the Soul*, art. 190; *PWD* 396.

²⁷ *E* IIP26schol.; Def.Aff.XXVIII.

²⁸ *E* IIIDef.Aff.XXVIII.

²⁹ See *E* VP58schol.

³⁰ *Passions of the Soul* art. 190; *PWD* 396.

³¹ On the link between superstition and fear, see the Preface to the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*: TTP 3-5/SO vol. 3, 5-6. See also James, *Philosophy, Religion and Politics in Spinoza*, 15–17, 129–30, 194; Tosel, “Superstition and Reading”; Nadler, *Spinoza’s Heresy*, 137–42; Carlisle, “Spinoza on Eternal Life.”

³² *E* VP58schol. Spinoza also emphasises the practical aspect of *acquiescentia in se ipso*. In the scholium to EVP10, which focuses on the cultivation and disciplining of the mind by a practice, at once imaginative and rational, of frequently attending to “a correct principle of living, *or* sure maxim of life,” he advises his reader to “keep in mind that the highest satisfaction of mind [*summa acquiescentia animi*] stems from the right principle of living.”

³³ *EVIP*52Dem.

³⁴ *Passions of the Soul*, art. 161; *PWD* 388.

³⁵ *Passions of the Soul*, art. 153; *PWD* 384.

³⁶ *Passions of the Soul*, art. 152; *PWD* 384. Spinoza criticises this view in *EV*, Preface. See Lloyd, *Part of Nature*, 82-3; Cooper, *Secular Powers*, 81.

³⁷ See *E* IIP40Schol.2, *E* IIP41. However, this denigration of imagination is qualified in *E* IIP17schol., where Spinoza states that “the mind does not err from the fact that it imagines, but only insofar as it [lacks] an idea which excludes the existence of those things which it imagines to be present to it.”

³⁸ *E* IIIP2schol.

³⁹ *E* III Def. Aff. VI.Exp.

⁴⁰ *E* I, Appendix; see also *E* IIP35schol.

⁴¹ *E* IP32; see also *E* IIP48, P49 and scholia.

⁴² See Cooper, *Secular Powers*, 95-6.

⁴³ *E* III Def. Aff. XXVI.Exp.

⁴⁴ *E* III Def. Aff. XXVII.

⁴⁵ *E* IIP35 and schol.

⁴⁶ *E* IIIP49schol.

⁴⁷ *E* VP5schol.

⁴⁸ *E* IIIP51schol.

⁴⁹ See Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 228; Cooper, *Secular Powers*, 94.

⁵⁰ *E* III Def. Aff. XXV and XXVI.

⁵¹ *E* III Def. Aff. XXVII Exp.

⁵² See *E* V, Preface, where Spinoza wonders at the views of Descartes, “so great a man,” “that most distinguished man,” “a philosopher of his calibre” – although here he is discussing Descartes’s general account of the soul’s power over the passions, not the idea of free will specifically (although of course this general account certainly involves the concept of the will).

⁵³ *E* IIP40Schol.2.

⁵⁴ For example, Julie Cooper highlights the “polyvalence” of *acquiescentia* in the *Ethics* and explores Spinoza’s “ambivalence” towards this affect, which she explains in terms of a distinction between its passive and active variants: see *Secular Powers*, 91. This analysis is not incorrect, but it can be made more precise. It is only when *acquiescentia* is understood in terms of the three kinds of cognition that its coherence within Spinoza’s philosophical system becomes clear.

⁵⁵ Giuseppina Totaro suggests that we find “an evolution, if not a real transformation” of *acquiescentia* from *Ethics* III to *Ethics* V, and she explains this “semantic evolution” in terms of the distinction between “reason” and “the intellect” – that is to say, between the second and the third kinds of knowledge: see “*Acquiescentia* dans la cinquième partie de l’*Ethique* de Spinoza,” 68-9. In focusing her analysis of *acquiescentia* on *Ethics* V, however, Totaro does not trace the changing significance of *acquiescentia* through all three kinds of knowledge – and it is this that provides the link between Spinoza’s critique of free will, of Cartesian philosophy, and of superstition, and his account of *acquiescentia* as the experiential character, or feeling-quality, of true understanding and blessedness.

⁵⁶ *E* IIP30 and schol., *E* IIP55schol., *E* III Def. Aff. XXIV Exp., *E* III Def. Aff. XXV.

⁵⁷ *E* IIP40Schol.2.

⁵⁸ *E* IIP30.

⁵⁹ *E* IIP51schol.

⁶⁰ *E* IIP53 and cor.

⁶¹ See *E* IVP52schol.

⁶² *E* IIP59schol.

⁶³ *E* VP2.

⁶⁴ *E* IIP55schol.

⁶⁵ E IIP55schol.

⁶⁶ E IVP58schol.

⁶⁷ E IIP58schol.

⁶⁸ E IIP58schol.

⁶⁹ E IIP58schol.

⁷⁰ E VP42schol.

⁷¹ See E IVP3, P4.

⁷² E VP42schol.

⁷³ Hobbes, *De Cive*, chapter XVII, §27. Spinoza had the original Latin edition (1642) of this work in his library: see Servaas van Rooijen (ed.), *La Bibliothèque de Bénédicte Spinoza*, 188. The 1651 English translation of *De Cive* has ‘acquiesce’ for *acquiescere*: “those subjects, who believe themselves bound to acquiesce to a foreign authority in those doctrines which are necessary to salvation, do not *per se* constitute a city, but are the subjects of that foreign power” – see Hobbes, *Philosophical Rudiments concerning government and society*, chapter XVII, §27.

⁷⁴ This concept of immanent obedience needs to be distinguished from the practical obedience, which need not involve knowledge of God’s nature, that Spinoza makes central to his definition of true religion in chapters 13 and 14 of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*: “an intellectual or precise knowledge of God is not a gift generally given to the faithful, as obedience is... All equally, men, women and children, can obey by command but cannot all be wise... [A] person believes something piously or impiously only in so far as they are moved to obedience by their beliefs or, as a result of them, deem themselves free to offend or rebel [against God’s word]... God requires no other knowledge from men than that of his divine justice and charity, knowledge required not for intellectual understanding but only for obedience [to the moral law]” (TTP 174-177/SO III 169-172). However, this discussion in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* does accommodate the more philosophical concept of immanent obedience signified by *acquiescentia*.

Spinoza writes in chapter 14 that “it has nothing to do with faith whether one believes that God...governs all things by liberty or from the necessity of nature, whether He issues edicts like a prince or teaches them as eternal truths, whether man obeys God of his own free will or by the necessity of the divine decree” (TTP 183/SO III 178). We know from the *Ethics* that those with adequate understanding adopt the second of each of these alternatives, so that Spinoza is here indicating an obedience “by the necessity of the divine decree,” this “decree” being synonymous with the “necessity of nature.” On Spinoza’s concept of obedience, see Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, 88-95. Balibar’s analysis differs from mine, not least in focusing more on Spinoza’s political writings, but he does indicate a connection between divine necessity and an obedience which “tends to cancel itself out through its own effects, as love and reason gradually gain the upper hand over fear and superstition” (92).

⁷⁵ E IVP52.

⁷⁶ E IVP52Dem.

⁷⁷ E IVP52Dem.

⁷⁸ E VP52schol.

⁷⁹ E IIID2.

⁸⁰ E IVP59Dem.

⁸¹ E VP10schol.

⁸² E VP10schol.

⁸³ E IV Appendix XXXII.

⁸⁴ E IIP49schol[IV.B].

⁸⁵ On the concept of consciousness in Spinoza, see Nadler, “Spinoza on Consciousness.”

⁸⁶ E III Def. Aff. VI.

⁸⁷ E VP4schol. See also EIVP61.

⁸⁸ E IVP61 and Dem.

⁸⁹ See *E* IV P35, P36, P37.

⁹⁰ TTP 182/SO III 177.

⁹¹ See *E* IIIDef. Aff. III.Exp.

⁹² *E* IIIP11.

⁹³ *E* IIIP11schol.

⁹⁴ *E* IIIP11schol.

⁹⁵ *E* IVP42Dem.

⁹⁶ *E* IVP42Dem.

⁹⁷ *E* IVP44schol.

⁹⁸ Bove, *La stratégie du conatus*, 111.

⁹⁹ Bove, *La stratégie du conatus*, 107.

¹⁰⁰ Bove, *La stratégie du conatus*, 108. Bove's analysis differs from mine, however, insofar as he identifies *bilaritas* with the third kind of knowledge, rather than the second kind – see p. 111 in particular.

¹⁰¹ On the third kind of knowledge, see Yovel, “The Third Kind of Knowledge as Salvation”; Melamed, “Mapping the Labyrinth of Spinoza's *Scientia Intuitiva*”; Carlisle, “Spinoza on Eternal Life.”

¹⁰² *E* VP30. On the relation of “being in”, or inherence (described by Don Garrett as “perhaps the most fundamental relation in Spinoza's metaphysics”), see Della Rocca, “Rationalism run amok: representation and the reality of the emotions in Spinoza”; Garrett, “Representation and consciousness in Spinoza's naturalistic theory of the imagination”; Nadler, “Whatever is, is in God”; Melamed, “Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance.” On the concept of being-in-God, see Carlisle, “Spinoza on Eternal Life.”

¹⁰³ See TTP 1, 180-1/SO III 175-6; Letter 76, SO IV 318; Carlisle, “Spinoza on Eternal Life.”

¹⁰⁴ See Rutherford, “Salvation as a State of Mind: The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza’s Ethics,” 459: “the third kind of knowledge...produces [the mind’s] greatest contentment, because only with this kind of knowledge is the natural striving of the mind for understanding fully satisfied in an immediate apprehension of the necessary dependence of all things on the eternal and infinite essence of God.”

¹⁰⁵ *TTP* 193/*SO* III 187-8.

¹⁰⁶ *E* VP27.

¹⁰⁷ *E* IVP52.

¹⁰⁸ See Totaro, “*Acquiescentia* dans la cinquième partie de l’*Ethique* de Spinoza,” 68-9; Rutherford, “The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza’s Ethics,” 458-9.

¹⁰⁹ *E* VP42Dem.

¹¹⁰ *TTP* 111/*SO* III 111. Samuel Shirley translates this passage as follows: “true salvation and blessedness consist in true contentment of mind and we find our true peace only in what we clearly understand” – see *TTP* (Shirley), 154.

¹¹¹ *E* VP25Dem.

¹¹² *E* VP27Dem.

¹¹³ *E* VP30.

¹¹⁴ *E* VP32 and Dem.

¹¹⁵ *E* VP32Cor.

¹¹⁶ *E* VP36, Dem. and schol. See also the Corollary to this proposition. See Totaro, “*Acquiescentia* dans la cinquième partie de l’*Ethique* de Spinoza,” 75: l’*acquiescentia animi* ne naît pas seulement de l’idée de soi mais de l’idée de Dieu comme principe et fondement de la connaissance en quoi consiste uniquement l’*essentia mentis*.

¹¹⁷ On the connection between *acquiescentia* and intellectual love of God, see Melamed, “Spinoza’s *Amor Dei Intellectualis*.” Melamed asks how Spinoza’s concept of love, which involves the idea of

an external cause, can be applied to God, who has no external cause, and he acknowledges that the love of God seems closer to the affect of *acquiescentia*. He suggests that in Part V of the *Ethics* Spinoza “attaches the additional title of ‘intellectual love’” to the affect of *acquiescentia in se ipso*, and wonders why he does so. My account responds to Melamed’s question by showing how the affects of *acquiescentia* and love that are clearly distinct in Part III converge to a single point in Part V, when they are related to the third kind of cognition, in which the idea of external causation is absorbed or dissolved into the singular truth of being-in-God, so that *acquiescentia* of the third kind and *amor Dei intellectualis* are two aspects of the same affect.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Matheron, *Individualité et relations interhumaines chez Spinoza*, 583-602; Gueroult, *Spinoza, II*; Yovel, “The Third Kind of Knowledge as Salvation”; Garrett, “Spinoza’s Theory of *Scientia Intuitiva*”; Melamed, “Mapping the Labyrinth of Spinoza’s *Scientia Intuitiva*.”

¹¹⁹ Oded Schechter argues that three modes of temporality correspond to Spinoza’s three kinds of knowledge: imagination corresponds to *tempus*, reason to *duratio*, and intuition to *eternitas*. See Schechter, “Temporalities and Kinds of Cognition in the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, the *Short Treatise*, and the *Ethics*.”

¹²⁰ *E* VP42schol.

¹²¹ *E* VP38schol.

¹²² See Carlisle, “Spinoza on Eternal Life.”

¹²³ See *E* VP22schol.

¹²⁴ *E* IIP40schol.2. Spinoza gave the same example in the *Short Treatise* and the *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*. In the *Short Treatise* he refers to the immediacy of intuition: “through his penetration he immediately sees the proportion in all the calculations” (*SO* I 55). In the *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* he suggests that when “Mathematicians...see the adequate proportionality of the given numbers,” they do so “not by the force of that [Euclidean] proposition, but intuitively, without going through any procedure” (§24). See Melamed,

“Mapping the Labyrinth of Spinoza’s *Scientia Intuitiva*,” for emphasis and explanation of this point: “[*scientia intuitiva*] is *not* a process that *takes time*... In [*scientia intuitiva*] the essence itself [of a thing] is perceived directly and not through any meditation... The inference involved in *scientia intuitiva* is clearly *not in time*” (104, 109, 111).

¹²⁵ Spinoza lists three limitations imposed on the intellect by Bacon: “first, [he] supposes that, besides the deceptions of the senses, the human intellect is fallible by its own nature... second, that the human intellect on account of its peculiar nature is prone to make abstractions, and imagines things to be stable which are in flux, etc. Thirdly, that the human understanding is unquiet, it cannot stop or rest.” The first of these limitations applies to Spinoza’s first kind of knowledge; while the second and third limitations encompass both the first and second kinds of knowledge. See Letter 2: *Correspondence* 76-7/SO IV 9.

¹²⁶ Letter 2: *Correspondence* 76-7/SO IV 9.

¹²⁷ See *E* IIP40schol.2.

¹²⁸ *E* VP25Dem.

¹²⁹ *E* VP27.

¹³⁰ See *E* VP31schol., P33schol.

¹³¹ See Pines, “On Spinoza’s Conception of Human Freedom and of Good and Evil.”

¹³² *E* IP17 and Cor. 2.

¹³³ See Rutherford, “Salvation as a State of Mind: The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza’s Ethics,” 459: “Accepting a systematic semantic distinction between *acquiescentia in se ipso* and *acquiescentia animi*, we must conclude that Spinoza is speaking loosely in IVP52S, when he says that the former is ‘the highest thing we can hope for.’ Part V demonstrates, on the contrary, that “man’s highest happiness, or blessedness” is to be identified only with the “contentment of mind” that arises from the third kind of knowledge.”

¹³⁴ Julie Cooper reaches a similar conclusion, but with a different emphasis: “Spinoza’s enthusiasm for *acquiescentia* reflects a recognition of human interdependence and a commitment to egalitarian community – not, as Poiret complained, an aspiration to divine self-sufficiency” (*Secular Powers*, 100). Cooper is right, I think, to argue that Spinoza’s radicalism lies in his attempt “to reframe the question of human finitude, refusing the Augustinian demand to choose between humility and pride” (104). But because her primary concern is to show that Spinoza’s thought is “consistent with egalitarian politics” (102), she overlooks the important differences between *acquiescentia* of the second kind and that of the third kind. And her commitment to a secularizing reading of Spinoza – albeit a nuanced and compelling version of such a reading – means that she would not recognize being-in-God as the fundamental principle of Spinoza’s thought – see especially 102-4. On the relationship between Spinoza’s *acquiescentia* and Christian conceptions of self-love, see Bove, *La stratégie du conatus*, 87-8; Strauss, *Spinoza’s Critique of Religion*, 203-4.

¹³⁵ *E* IVP45schol.

¹³⁶ For an overview, see Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2, Introduction, chapter 3. See also *L’Hermeneutique du sujet*; “The Genealogy of Ethics” and “Concern for Self.”

¹³⁷ See Carlisle, *On Habit*, 52-8.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Balibar, Etienne. *Spinoza and Politics*. London: Verso, 1998.

Bove, Laurent. *La stratégie du conatus*. Paris: Vrin, 1996.

Carlisle, Clare. "Spinoza on Eternal Life." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 89 (2015): 69-96.

Carlisle, Clare. *On Habit*. London: Routledge, 2014.

Cooper, Julie E. *Secular Powers: Humility in Modern Political Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. [*Secular Powers*]

Curley, Edwin, ed. *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Deegan, Thomas, ed. *Ethics by Benedict de Spinoza, Translated by George Eliot*. Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Americanistik, 1981. [*Ethics, trans. Eliot*]

Della Rocca, Michael. "Rationalism run amok: representation and the reality of the emotions in Spinoza." In Hueneman, *Interpreting Spinoza* ["Rationalism run amok"]

Descartes, R. *Oeuvres de Descartes*, vol. XI. Edited by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1967. [*Oeuvres*]

Descartes, R. *Passiones Animae, per renatum Descartes. Gallice ab ipso conscriptae, nunc autem in exterorum gratiam Latina civitate donatae Ab H.D.M.I.V.L.* Amstelodami: 1650. [*Passiones Animae*]

Descartes, R. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1. Translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. [*PWD*]

Dibon, Paul. “En marge de la Préface a la traduction latine des *Passions de l’ame* de Descartes.” *Studia Cartesiana* 1 (1979): 91-110.

Foucault, Michel. “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress.” In Rabinow (ed.), *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, vol. 1. [“Genealogy of Ethics”]

Foucault, Michel. “The Ethics of Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom.” In Rabinow, *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, vol. 1.

Foucault, Michel. *L’Hermeneutique du sujet: Cours au Collège de France (1981-1982)*. Paris: Seuil, 2001. [*L’Hermeneutique du sujet*]

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2: *The Use of Pleasure*, translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990. [*History of Sexuality* 2]

Frankfurt, Harry G. *Taking Ourselves Seriously and Getting It Right*, ed. Debra Satz. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Garrett, Don. “Representation and consciousness in Spinoza’s naturalistic theory of the imagination.” In Hueneman, *Interpreting Spinoza*. [“Representation and consciousness”]

Garrett, Don. "Spinoza's Theory of *Scientia Intuitiva*." In *Scientia in Early Modern Philosophy* edited by T. Sorell et al. New York: Springer, 2010.

Gueroult, M. *Spinoza, II*. Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1974.

Hobbes, T. *De Cive*. Paris: 1642.

Hobbes, T. *Philosophical Rudiments concerning government and society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Hueneman, Charlie, ed. *Interpreting Spinoza*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Israel, Jonathan. *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. [*Radical Enlightenment*]

James, Susan. *Philosophy, Religion and Politics in Spinoza*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

LeBuffe, M. *From Bondage to Freedom: Spinoza on the Human Good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. [*From Bondage to Freedom*]

Lloyd, Genevieve. *Part of Nature: Self-Knowledge in Spinoza's Ethics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. [*Part of Nature*]

Matheron, Alexandre. *Individualité et relations interhumaines chez Spinoza*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1969.

Melamed, Yitzhak. "Mapping the Labyrinth of Spinoza's *Scientia Intuitiva*." In *Übergänge - diskursiv oder intuitiv? Essays zu Eckart Försters "Die 25 Jahre der Philosophie"*, edited by Johannes Haag and Markus Wild, 99-116. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2013.

Melamed, Yitzhak. "Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance: The Substance-Mode Relation as a Relation of Inherence and Predication." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 78 (2009): 17-82. ["Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance"]

Nadler, Steven. "Spinoza on Consciousness." *Mind* 117 (2008): 575-601.

Nadler, Steven. *Spinoza's Heresy: Immortality and the Jewish Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. [*Spinoza's Heresy*]

Paul Rabinow, ed. *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, vol. 1: Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. New York: The New Press, 1997. [*The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, vol. 1*]

Pines, S. "On Spinoza's Conception of Human Freedom and of Good and Evil." In *Spinoza: His Thought and Work*, edited by Nathan Rotenstreich and Norma Schneider. Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1983.

Poiret, Pierre. *Cogitationes Rationales De Deo, Animo, et Malo*. Amsterdam, 1685. [*Cogitationes Rationales*]

Rutherford, D. “Salvation as a State of Mind: The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza’s Ethics”.
British Journal for the History of Philosophy 7 (1999): 447-473.

Schechter, Oded. “Temporalities and Kinds of Cognition in the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, the *Short Treatise*, and the *Ethics*.” In *The Young Spinoza*, edited by Yitzhak Melamed.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. [“Temporalities and Kinds of Cognition”]

Servaas van Rooijen, A.J. (ed.) *La Bibliothèque de Bénédicte Spinoza*. La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1889.

Spinoza, B. *Ethics*. Translated by Edwin Curley in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*. Princeton:
Princeton University Press, 1985. [E]

Spinoza, B. *Opera*. Edited by Carl Gebhardt. Heidelberg: 1925. [SO]

Spinoza, B. *The Correspondence of Spinoza*. Translated by A. Wolf. London: Frank Cass, 1966.
[Correspondence]

Spinoza, B. *Theological-Political Treatise*. Edited by Jonathan Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2007. [TTP]

Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, trans. Samuel Shirley. Leiden: Brill, 1989. [TTP (Shirley)]

Steenbakkers, Piet. “Lodewijk Meyer’s catalogue of the passions (1670): between Descartes and Spinoza” in Steenbakkers, *Spinoza’s Ethica From Manuscript to Print*, 103-128. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1994. [“Lodewijk Meyer’s catalogue of the passions”]

Steven Nadler, “‘Whatever is, is in God’: substances and things in Spinoza’s metaphysics.” In Hueneman, *Interpreting Spinoza*. [“‘Whatever is, is in God’”]

Strauss, Leo. *Spinoza’s Critique of Religion*, translated by Elsa Sinclair. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Tosel, André. “Superstition and Reading.” In *The New Spinoza*, edited by Warren Montag and Ted Stolze, 146-167. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Totaro, Giuseppina. “*Acquiescentia* dans la cinquième partie de l’*Ethique* de Spinoza”. *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l’Etranger* 184 (1994): 65-79.

Voss, Stephen H. “How Spinoza enumerated the Affects.” *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 63 (1981): 167-179.

Voss, Stephen H. “On the authority of the *Passiones Animæ*”, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 75 (1993): 160-178.

Wilson, Margaret D. “Spinoza’s theory of knowledge”. In *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Don Garrett, 89-141. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Wittich, Christoph. *Anti-Spinoza; sive examen Ethices B. de Spinoza et Commentaries de Deo et ejus attributis. Epistola*. Amsterdam, 1690. [*Anti-Spinoza*]

Wolff, Christian. *Gesammelte Werke* II, vol. 5. Edited by J. Ecole, H.W. Arndt, and J.E. Hofmann. Hildesheim: Olms, 1968.

Yovel, Yirmiyahu. "The Third Kind of Knowledge as Alternative Salvation." In *Spinoza: Issues and Directions. The proceedings of the Chicago Spinoza Conference*, edited by Edwin Curley and Pierre-François Moreau, 157-175. Leiden: Brill, 1990.